

MATO CONFERENCE DEBRIEF

The First Annual NMLC Multiple Award Task Order Contract Conference was held in Frederick, Maryland on 16 February 2000. Comments received from presenters and attendees both indicate the conference was a success. NMLC Code 02 met on 24 February 2000 to go over issues raised by contractors during the conference and talk about potential process improvements.

COST ISSUES/DISCUSSIONS

Contractor comments.

Contractors expressed the desire for more information about NMLC's expectations with respect to costs. Some contractors felt that we didn't give them enough information during discussions. More than just, "We think your price is too low," is necessary. This is especially true when the offeror presents market survey information in support of the price. If we don't deem the information convincing, we should say why not.

Contractors asked specifically if we would consider releasing the Independent Government Cost Estimate (IGCE), the budgetary limitations, or acceptable salary ranges.

Debrief Discussion.

We're still reluctant to provide the IGCE or budget information. We're afraid that we will get proposals back that mimic the IGCE, when we would prefer an independent analysis. If the IGCE is off, then we have a "blind leading the blind" situation. We want and need the independent analysis of firms in this industry. They're the experts. It seems, however, that not all contractors are using the tools available on the Internet and elsewhere to get good salary data. We agreed to explore compiling a list of available resources and posting them on the web for contractors' use (see below). We'll also explore providing with the solicitation an analysis of compensation currently being provided for contracts for the same service. We'll have to be careful not to divulge privileged financial data associated with specific contracts or contractors in the analysis. Another idea was to provide acceptable salary ranges to those offerors in the competitive range during discussions. That would give us an opportunity to validate the IGCE by comparing it with initial prices received. We would then have a higher confidence level in the salary ranges provided to the contractors.

IGCE sources:

- Socioeconomic Characteristics of Medical Practice, AMA
- Physician Marketplace Statistics, AMA
- Physician Compensation and Production Survey, Medical Group Management Assoc., Englewood, CO
- Hospital Salary & Benefits Report, Hospital & Healthcare Compensation Service, Oakland, NJ

- Physician Salary Survey Report, Hospital & Healthcare Compensation Service, Oakland, NJ
- Hospital Nursing Personnel Survey, AHA
- Local hospitals, clinics, and practices

Note: This list is provided for informational purposes only. It is not intended to be a definitive list and we, in no way, guarantee the applicability, accuracy or completeness of the content found in these sources. The offeror still must do its own homework and formulate its own assessment of existing and projected market conditions.

TASK ORDER PROPOSAL REQUEST AND EVALUATION PROCESS

Contractor Comments:

Contractors object to having to provide complete technical packages in response to the TOPR. Having to recruit and identify specific candidates for every task order proposal increases costs and PALT. Contractors understand that failure to provide acceptable candidates after award will harm their chances for award of future task orders.

Debrief Discussion:

We will modify MATO contracts (when it makes sense to do so) to permit, but not require, evaluation of candidates' qualifications as part of the task order award process. In situations where we are acquiring the services of many comparatively lower skilled health care workers, technical packages should be the exception. In situations where we are acquiring the services of one or few comparatively higher skilled healthcare workers, technical packages should be the rule. We will work with our Code 07 counterparts to question circumstances where technical packages seem to have minimal value in proportion to cost as an award discriminator. "Because the activity wants it," is not a reason by itself. Why does the customer think that reviewing individual candidates' qualifications is necessary to make a good award? As the amount of MATO past performance information increases, the need for technical packages should decrease because we (and the customer) should have greater confidence in past performance as a predictor of future performance.

When technical packages are used, is there a benefit to reducing the amount of information needed and making the process paperless? Could we add references to the PQS form, send it to MATO contractors electronically, and then get it back from them electronically with their prices? The technical evaluators could call references in lieu of reviewing the letters of recommendations. Would we want MATO contractors to at least fax us the cover page of the PQS with the healthcare worker's signature? If we do, can we still count it as a paperless process? We will explore this potential process improvement.

CPARS LINKS

Contractor Comment: Could we write an article about CPARS for our web page and provide a link to the CPARS site?

Debrief Discussion: Yes.